NOTES AS TO *SYMPHYTUM OFFICINALE*.

BY ROBERT. T. COOPER, M.D.

THE appended letter from a lady is interesting when taken along with recent experiences of mine regarding the action of the common *Comfrey ;* it would be premature to refer to her own case ; that of her daughter was the result of a single dose (arborivital) of *Aquilegia Vulg*.

" DEAR DR. COOPER,—I received your letter and enclosure yesterday, and took the powder immediately (7.45 a.m.), and

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though it seems extraordinary, it is really true that I worked in the garden (stooping) for an hour, gathering fruit, &c., and only once felt the slipping out I told you of, which for months has always taken place in a very few minutes. To-day I have not had any exertion, but have not felt anything at all of the piles. I will write again at the end of the fortnight, and tell you the result of the action of the medicine. I have been much interested in reading your new work on *Serious Cases Saved from Operation*, and the cases quoted are certainly wonderful. I was particularly interested as to the action of the common *Comfrey*, as, just before I was married, I had a very severe and dangerous attack of scarlet fever. When I was recovering, abscesses formed on both sides the neck, just below the ear, but the swelling was so great inside that I could only swallow liquid with great difficulty. The swelling outside extended from the ear to the chin, and was very hard and intensely painful. Two doctors were attending me, and both recommended and applied various remedies without any effect, when an old servant of my grandfather's brought down some of the common *Comfrey*, and begged my mother to apply it as a poultice. She did so, and the pain was immediately relieved, and both abscesses decreased rapidly until they were entirely absorbed, and, as far as I can remember, without any external discharge. Since then I have always grown the plant, and have given it to poor neighbours with equally good results.

It was to my little girl's throat I referred. Since you prescribed for her she has had no return of the glandular swellings and tonsillitis she so frequently suffered from, and in fact has had no illness whatever. As before she was an exceedingly delicate child, and usually had three or four attacks every winter, this is a great advance. She is now growing fast, and except that she is highly strung and excitable, seems quite healthy. Occasionally she gets little pieces of hard cheesy matter from her tonsils, but without any pain.

" With apologies for the length of this letter, and many thanks,

" I am,

" Yours very truly.

My friend, Mr. Lane Clark, the well-known dental surgeon, acting upon my suggestion, made use of the *Comfrey* in this case :—

A middle-aged practitioner, in large general practice, was advised to submit to operation by Mr. Clark for a carious condition of the upper jaw in connection with the front incisor teeth, and extending up to the floor of the

nose, the bone being infiltrated with pus, and the teeth loose in their sockets and useless, not being able to bite upon them.

As the gentleman could not arrange to leave his practice Mr. Clark suggested treatment by medicines, a suggestion that was at once voted to be ridiculous, but nevertheless was submitted to. *Symphyt. Officin.*, in three-drop doses three times a day, was prescribed with three inter-current doses of *Merc. Cor.* 3x, and at the end of a fortnight the patient returned with the condition of his mouth quite changed ; the teeth had become fixed, the gum over the bone had healed up, and the purulent discharge from the bone had disappeared.

A surgeon who had seen the patient on the first occasion along with Mr. Clark declared he would not have believed it to be the same mouth had he not himself seen it.

Mentioning the subject of *Comfrey* to Dr. Von Dittmann, of St. Petersburg, the other day, he affirmed that for years he had used it with most excellent results in carious conditions of bones.